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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ANNE MONTGOMERY PEYTON

A CONTRIBUTION
TO THE
LEWIS MEMORIAL VOLUME.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ANNE MONTGOMERY PEYTON

BY HER SON

J. L. PEYTON.

“A contribution to the Lewis memorial volume originated by the trustees and faculty of Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, and to be published during the first Centennial year of the Republic of the United States of America.”

GUERNSEY:

F. CLARKE, PUBLISHER, STATES ARCADE,

JULY 4TH, 1876.

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MEMORIALS
OF THE
LEWIS FAMILY.
OF

Belle Fontaine, (Anciently Fort Lewis,) Augusta County,
Virginia.

This pamphlet is reprinted from the *Guernsey Magazine*, in which periodical the memorials were introduced by the following note :—

Some months since, the trustees and faculty of Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, decided to erect a hall, at an expense of £10,000, for the Library, Museum, and public exercises, and to call it "LEWIS CENTENNIAL HALL" in honor of General Andrew Lewis, one of the foremost military men of America, and the hero of the battle of Point Pleasant, which was fought and won against the Confederate Indian tribes by the Colonial forces of Virginia, on the 10th day of October, 1774. At the same time they decided to publish a work containing a history of the Lewis family, with a biographical sketch of General Lewis and of other eminent members of the family, and also an account of the ceremonies to take place on the 10th of October, 1876, when the remains of General Lewis are to be removed from their present resting-place and re-interred near the hall or in a crypt under it.

Col. JOHN LEWIS PEYTON, a distinguished descendant on the maternal side of the Lewis family, his great grandfather, Col. William Lewis, having been a younger brother of General Lewis, has been invited by the authorities of Roanoke College, and has consented, to write these biographical sketches, &c., &c., and to edit the memorial volume. From his MS. we are permitted to publish the article below, which, we are sure, our readers will peruse with pleasure and profit.

It rarely falls to the lot of the biographer to be able to draw from life a more attractive character than that of the subject of the following sketch.—ED.

ANNE MONTGOMERY PEYTON.

Among the noteworthy women of Virginia during the early part of the present century, our comparatively unknown and entirely unsung Southern heroines, was the subject of this sketch. Remarkable for her practical ability and efficiency, her graceful and accomplished taste, the extent and variety of her literary attainments, the unselfish generosity of her heart, and her unostentatious charities, no one was more highly esteemed while living, or was more mourned when, in the midst of her bright and useful career, struck down by the hand of death. Nor is there one of those departed Matrons—the peerless women of Virginia,—whose memory is more cherished by those among whom she lived; for, it was her peculiar good fortune to be at once the life and joy of her family, the “bright particular star” of the society in which she moved, and the pride and ornament of the community.

Anne Montgomery Peyton was born at the Sweet Springs, Monroe County, Virginia, in the year 1802. Her father, Major John Lewis, was a man of large fortune, having inherited this extensive and valuable estate from his father, Col. William Lewis, commonly called the “Civilizer of the border.” Major Lewis was a distinguished officer of that branch of the military forces of the “Thirteen United Colonies,” styled the “Continental line,” and served under Washington until the close of the revolutionary war. A little more than two years after the surrender of the British Army at York-town, by Lord Cornwallis, October 17th—19th, 1781, namely, in the winter of 1783, when Washington relinquished the command of the army, Major Lewis returned to the Sweet Springs where he spent the rest of his life, improving his property and enjoying the society of his friends. He married, in 1795, Mary Preston, the fourth daughter of Col. William Preston, of Smithfield, County of Montgomery, and sister of the late James Patton Preston, Governor of Virginia. She is

reported to have been a woman of great personal charms and of uncommon vivacity and intellect, and of varied accomplishments. As spirited as beautiful, she was one of the true type of that Virginian character which has made itself known and felt throughout the world.

She died at an early age, leaving a large family of young children, and it devolved upon his mother, as being one of the oldest, to act the part of mother and sister towards them—a duty which she nobly performed, ever extending to them Christian care and true sympathy. The portals of Montgomery Hall were always open to receive them and her younger brothers. In fact it became the home of her sisters, three of whom were subsequently, at different periods, married from it; namely, Margaret Lynn, to Mr. Cochran, Sarah, to her cousin, Col. J. Lewis, of Kenawha, and Polydora, to Mr. Gosse, of Albemarle. Her two younger brothers John Benjamin, and Thomas also lived with her several years while attending school in Staunton.

Anne Lewis, the third child of Major John Lewis and Mary Preston, and according to contemporaneous accounts, the most favoured by nature of them all; was entered in her thirteenth year at the school—a school in great repute at that day—of Mr. Crutchfield, a learned Englishman who had been educated in France. It was situated in the Falling Spring Valley near the Peytona Cascades, Alleghany County.

The reader will probably excuse a brief reference to this valley which is so remarkable for its scenic charms, the cascade being the most striking point, that one cannot pass through it without feeling the truth of Cowper's beautiful lines—"God made the Country and man made the Town." The variety, the perfection, and indeed everything about a lively country scene so eclipse the noise and bustle and turmoil of a large town that I have sometimes been so uncharitable as to think that those who did not love the country, could scarcely love their Maker; but to

indulge such a thought would be illiberal, decidedly wrong. And yet the country has many, many charms, peculiar to itself and of a peculiar character; and although it is certain that a vicious mind will think of God nowhere, while a pious one will behold him in everything, it nevertheless cannot be doubted that there are natural tendencies in the bustle, parade, and business of large commercial towns, to turn away the soul from God; while innumerable objects are presented in the country which lead the mind of the reflective "through Nature up to Nature's God."

The general truth of these remarks has always been impressed on our mind when in the country, and more especially when rambling during the summer through the enchanting regions of Western Virginia, almost every locality of which is illustrated by some wild legend of the border wars.

In one of the loveliest spots of this picturesque land, Mr. Crutchfield had wisely established his school—no doubt influenced in its choice by its central position in the State, its retired situation and the extreme healthfulness of the climate. Amidst these scenes in the "sweet sequestered vale," Anne Lewis spent her early youth, making much progress in learning and acquiring a fund of valuable information. Studying with unexampled industry, she carried off the highest prizes. But even in this, the school of highest grade at that period in Western Virginia, she was in a measure deprived of that thorough and liberal education which her ambition craved. And when she had completed the course and returned home it was with a painful consciousness on her part of how little she knew and how much she had yet to learn.

She often spoke in after years in a lively and amusing way of her life at this remote seminary, and of how the scholars had to rough it; of what would now be styled their hardships, but which did not seriously effect these light hearted girls. She alluded to her own life at this season of her early joys, as smooth and pleasant, and to the

valley of the Falling Spring as a kind of earthly paradise. Her opening years here and at her home, at the Sweet Springs, were eminently happy and this sunny morning betokened the short, but cloudless day that was coming.

Concerning their life at Mr. Crutchfield's generally she said it was not uncomfortable or unpleasant. His table was liberally supplied with whatever the country produced, such as beef, mutton, poultry, and now and again, with game and fish furnished by the forests, and the mountain streams. Of foreign luxuries they knew little or nothing. Their coffee was generally roasted rye, or a mixture of rye and "Rio," and their evening drink was milk or Sassafras tea. When they visited distant friends they rode on horse back, or were crowded into Mr. Crutchfield's cariole—a kind of covered spring cart.

In their intervals of toilsome labour, and Mr. C. was far from allowing his pupils to neglect their studies; they passed much of their time gathering wild flowers in the green fields or on the mountain sides, visiting from time to time the cottages of the hearty mountaineers, whose good wives always welcomed them with a glass of sweet milk, some new laid eggs, or delicious fruit.

It must be remembered that all these hours of leisure were not given to enjoyment only,—hours so favourable to improvement were better employed. When they returned from the fields, their hands tinted with the rich purple and crimson of the flowers they had gathered, it was not the blood stain of murdered time. On the contrary they were only signs of the eagerness with which they pursued knowledge as well as pleasure, in some department of natural history, for they were always accompanied in their out door excursions by a teacher. Trees were waving, flowers blooming, birds singing, and insects revelling around them—the very pebbles in their pathway contained a history of the past within them; the stream flowing by them had its funny tribes, most wonderfully adapted to their element, and these lighter hours were given to an examination, almost a

study, of these objects—animate and inanimate, as they came from the hands of our Creator. And it may be safely asserted that few but professional botanists were deeper versed at a little later period in the virtues of various herbs and plants, and how they might be made subservient to our uses, domestic and medicinal, than was Anne Lewis.

It was during her sojourn at this school, while spending a holiday with her sister, Mrs. Massie, at the Valley Farm, that she first met John Howe Peyton, then in the zenith of his professional success and one of the handsomest and most accomplished men in Virginia. He had recently returned from active service with the army of 1812-15, of which he was one of the most daring and enterprising officers. She was at this time in the flush of opening womanhood, at the romantic age, and listened with wrapt attention and delight to his eloquent conversation, his graphic and animated accounts of the camp and field. She was herself rich in what has been styled with poetic licence the fatal dower of beauty and was as clever as pretty. The result may be as easily imagined as told—they were speedily betrothed and shortly after her return to the paternal roof, though her beauty drew suitors for her hand from far and near, were married (1821.)

It was a fortunate marriage and brought her all the happiness promised by a union with the chosen of her heart. Her home was thereafter in Staunton for a few years and subsequently till her death at Montgomery Hall. She thus returned to the original location of her great grandfather the "lord of the hills," to pass her life amidst the scenes rendered historic by his and his brave companions' long struggle with their savage enemies and almost within sight of the ruins of that Fort Lewis, under whose stent walls the infant colony grew, in time, strong enough to defy every foe.

Civil life, as we know it, hardly existed in those days in Virginia; all that was powerful, all that was honoured was connected with war; the ideas of the time more or less

insensibly took a military colour ; men's callings and necessity were in one way or other to fight ; and to fight with effect needed combination, endurance, and practice, and the rude forts of the frontier were camps or barracks where there was continual drill and exercise, fixed times, appointed tasks, hard fare, incessant watchfulness, an absolute obedience to officers. Armed men, with sentinels posted to give warning of an enemy's approach, tilled the fields. Cattle were herded at night around the strong places ; pickets scoured the country day and night, and, in fact, all the precautions were taken which are necessary to intruders in an enemy's country. Many a dark tale of massacre has been connected with the settlement of West Augusta ; and the story of the Lewises and other pioneers, forms a romantic and memorable feature in the sad history of the times. Fort Lewis was the only place of security west of the Blue Ridge, and south of Winchester. It was a fortress of little architectural extent or pretension, but in its associations one of the most popular and interesting of our historical places.

In her new home she soon developed more fully the noble qualities which so much endeared her to a numerous circle of friends and the intellectual parts by which she was afterwards so widely known. There was no object of a humane and laudable kind to which she did not devote her time and attention, but particularly was her active philanthropy displayed in connexion with the large slave population on her husband's estates. She made herself intimately acquainted with the real condition of the negroes on these plantations and set on foot remedies for the evils necessarily incident to their condition. Her labours were attended with success, and not only the physical but the intellectual and moral condition of these unfortunate beings was improved and advanced. Her influence with every class of these poor blacks was great, particularly with those whose fierce natures led them into trouble. Before her noble and gentle womanhood, before her kind

manner, and beneath her affecting tones, the hardest hearts melted, the most savage creatures gave way. Those who had been exasperated by the cruel usage of overseers into defiance, those who had been hardened by injustice into a strong indifference, those who had been plunged by neglect as much as by temptation into crime, became astonished at her sympathy, soothed by her consideration, their whole natures dissolved in tears and tenderness and they regarded her as a ministering angel. Few equalled her in the perfection of her spiritual nature, and no one exceeded her in quiet achievements within her sphere, on behalf of her suffering fellow mortals, over evil, ignorance, harshness and oppression and over popular prejudice, and her life was a long triumph in the cause of virtue, mercy and love without ostentation or display.

Happily the prosperity of Virginia was in her day so exuberant, that there was little poverty of any kind. There are, however, always cases of want to be found in every community, and these she sought out and relieved when and where the world was not cognizant. In a word she offered bread to the famishing and hope to the desperate. Her tender sympathy extended even to the brute creation. She could not patiently endure to see dumb creatures suffering from cruelty or want of proper care, and the very animals instinctively regarded her as their thoughtful friend.

She became the mother of ten children all of whom reached years of maturity, and with one exception married and have families of their own, and all now survive but her second daughter, Anne Montgomery, who died unmarried in 1870.* She was, as we shall see, a most careful mother and affectionate wife, looking up to her husband as a superior being, and took upon herself the heavy burden of care in connection with the rearing and education of this numerous family, to which her husband could give little attention from the absorbing pursuit of his profession and the overwhelming character of his engagements.

It was truly in the domestic sphere that she most shone,

* See Note A.

and her children owe so much to her teachings and example, to her maternal tenderness and training, that the recollection of their days at the Hall is the most precious remembrance they carry with them through life.

Her mind was always active in devising means for the benefit of her children. Nor would she allow any personal inconvenience or discomfort to interfere with her plans for carrying them out. She often entered into their juvenile games and amusements with all the vivacity of her nature. Nor did it lessen the deference and respect they felt for her. She knew when to be little and when to be great. When to exercise her authority, how to enhance her influence, and the value of example in enforcing both. Thus obedience became so easy that her children soon combined the pleasure of anticipating her wishes with the duty of compliance. Of course in every family there are to be found wrong tempers, feverish ailments, and perverseness of disposition, and willing obedience cannot be, at all times and on all occasions, obtained however consistently authority may be maintained. But as far as a child however helpless, ignorant, and inexperienced could be brought into habits of obedience by a judicious exercise of parental authority, without an approach to undue severity, it was accomplished by her tact and discretion.

Some one has called the boy the "father of the man," but the mother is more especially the parent of the child. The very pulses of its life throb responsively with hers, from her heart it springs into being and her heart should be its natural shelter and resting place while life lasts. A Christain mother she was who made the well-being of her children, spiritual and physical next to her duty to God and her husband, the object of her most watchful attention, and whether in the nursery, the play or school rooms, or the household bestowed upon them the utmost care, instructing them at one time and romping with them at another.

In their sports it was, indeed, her habit frequently to

join. She considered play not merely essential to a child's happiness, but to its physical moral and spiritual well being. She therefore interested herself in the amusements of her children with as much zeal and enjoyment apparently as they themselves—thus at very little expense and trouble to herself adding greatly to their pleasures. She would now and again pull the children's wagons around the nursery, make a flag for a little boat, or dress a doll in the style of our Revolutionary matrons from a few scraps of silk and calico. She studied the characters of her different children as they were developed in play and thus gained an insight into their inner life which guided her as to their future. Some children are naturally of a robust constitution and their play is characterized by noise and action; others not so strong are of a more gentle and studious disposition, pursue their amusements in comparative quiet. She observed this and regulated her course accordingly for she considered it a sign of ill health if one of the brood sat silently and mopingly apart from the group; and at once sought the cause of such an unnatural state of things and to remove it. In the merest trifles she exercised a wise judgment and considered nothing trivial which concerned the happiness of her children. For example, so minute and particular was she that she never allowed the children to play with one particular set of toys until they had lost all their interest and were cast aside. This, she asserted, taught them two bad habits—to wear out a pleasure threadbare, and reckless destruction. She did not interfere violently to deprive the children of them, but joining in their play for a few moments would suggest a change. With flushed cheeks and laughing eyes she would draw them into a lively romp or game of "puss in the corner," in order to get them away from a spot where they had been too long over kites, puzzles, or dolls dresses.

Few families of children indeed had more care bestowed upon them, and no one can fail to admire the good sense and

tact of a mother who with such arts contributed to the happiness of her little brood. Often did she with a box of paints, a pencil and some paper employ the children during a wet afternoon, or in fine weather having a game of hoop or *graces* in the grounds. Considering play one of the first necessities of a child's existence, she encouraged hers to play with all their hearts—but never to the neglect of graver studies. These were attended to in proper season. But when play time came they were free to enjoy themselves thoroughly, so that their fun did not run into mischief. Thus her children associated their mother with their pleasant memories of enjoyment and she never went amongst them that her presence was not hailed with joy.

With their education strictly so speaking, she was equally particular, though her duties prevented her from conducting it herself. She saw however, that the person (Miss Lucy Stone) a native of Massachusetts and educated in Boston, to whose care they were for some years confided (and afterwards Miss Forneret) the daughter of a retired officer of the British Army and educated in Paris, was worthy of the charge.

With their school tasks she was herself familiar and saw that their minds were not overtasked, and now and again cautioned Miss Stone to suit their lessons to their ages and capacities, saying "strengthen and instruct, do not tire the mind."

Sometimes she questioned them herself to ascertain whether they understood their own lessons rather than learnt them by *rote* without taking in the meaning of them. Often during hours of recreation, she spoke of the means of acquiring information and said there were five eminent methods whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things, namely by observation, reading, instruction by lectures, conversation and thought or study. What was meant by these terms she fully explained, and lest she might fatigue and create a distaste for learning by such

serious discourse, would on occasions with much tact glide into lighter themes, and tell stories teaching valuable lessons, through this medium, every story having a moral which the young people were left to draw from the incidents of the narrative. Information was thus conveyed to their minds without fatiguing them, so that to learn from her was a positive pleasure. She taught them also to write little stories by making pleasant suggestions to them. Never shall the writer forget his admiration of her talents and efficiency when she would at their request sometimes condescend to write one herself. It was sure to be effective and set us thinking. Nor his gratitude for aid, when he was confronted with the task of answering his first letter. A few days after its receipt sitting down in the presence of his mother he commenced a reply. His ideas would not flow in orthodox channels, he could think of nothing to say that did not have reference to the farm and stable, and begged his mother to give him some assistance. "No" she answered, "do your best, I will then examine and correct it, or write something for you."

After completing his note which was redolent as may be imagined of the farm and stable, he gave it to her. She laughed heartily at his first effort, but sweetened what he thought her irony by a little praise. It was not, however she said the kind of letter his aunt would expect or care to read. She then in a few moments, without taking her pen from the paper, dashed off a letter of sparkling diction and fascinating humour. Surprised, amazed indeed at her readiness and power of description, delighted at what appeared to him her wonderful success, proud of her as his mother and withal grateful for her assistance, he threw his arms round about her neck, covering her with kisses and exclaiming "Why Mamma you are indeed a genius—a giant of the pen. I never will be able to write like that."

His first guide and his earliest critic, he soon learned from her that affection for literature which has afforded

him so much solace in his chequered life. She availed herself of this occasion to impress upon him the advantages of aiming at perfection in every thing he undertook.

The tenor of her remarks may be thus summarized: unless aimed at we certainly would never attain perfection while frequent attempts would make it easy. She animadverted upon idleness and indifference, remarking that in the comparatively unimportant matter of writing a letter as it was considered, we should give it our greatest care, that it might be as perfect in all its parts as we could make it. The subject should be expressed plainly and intelligibly, and in as elegant a style as we were capable of. Before writing a sentence we should examine it, that it might contain nothing vulgar or inelegant in thought or word; that we should guard ourselves against attempts at wit, which might wound, or too much levity and familiarity which was foolish and impertinent. And seek to express ourselves with manly simplicity, free of all affectation. This was the usual style of Cicero's epistles and rendered them deeply interesting. No one could reach such excellence, without purity in the choice of words, justness of construction, joined with perspicuity of style. That in our letters we should not attempt what is called fine writing, but have them, like our conversation, unstudied and easy.

In regard to the use of words she declared that there was nothing which made one so ridiculous as the use of big words. It was a mistake of the young and of many grown people too, to suppose that it was necessary to use big words to express big ideas. The simpler the dress of a grand idea the better. This was illustrated in the Psalms, the book of Job, and the Prophecies. In the English language the most vigorous and expressive words are of one syllable and of Danish, Saxon, or Celtic origin. Our long words were principally from the Greek and Latin. Our curt *no* was from the Saxon and so of its antithesis *yes*. Wise men were short talkers, and condensed a world

of meaning in a word, and instead of interlarding conversation with foreign words, stuck to English undefiled. In the present day people mistook inflation for eloquence and used long compound instead of brief and pithy nouns and verbs. All this was bad taste. Simplicity and clearness were the sterling elements of conversation, of a speech, of a wholesome literature.

She mentioned a very common error into which inexperience led many young persons, that of addressing all individuals alike. Writers should guard against this habit and not use the same language to superiors, inferiors and equals, but address in one way the aged and in another the young—and so of the grave and facetious, &c. Thus at a very early age she imbued her children with correct sentiments on points of politeness, of intellectual improvement and moral deportment.

She particularly disliked extravagant, what she called “random talking,” and early warned her children against exaggeration, quoting in this connection from her favourite work:—

“He that hath knowledge spareth his words, and even a fool when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”

Her children were also earnestly admonished against evil speaking, as indicating a want of regard to the high and loving authority of God who has positively forbidden it,—“If any man offend *not* in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body”—such evil speaking denoted a want of brotherly love and charity, of humility in our hearts which would teach us that we are too vile ourselves to complain of others.

In all of her teachings the Bible was the basis of all direct religious instruction, its facts, doctrines, histories—the law, the Gospel. She endeavoured not only to make it plain to the understanding and to impress it on the memory, but to bring it to bear on the conscience and the affections. They were taught to reverence the Sabbath-

day, to engage in daily prayer, not only for a blessing on their efforts generally, but very especially for the "exceeding greatness of that mighty power," which, whatever means are used, can alone raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The Scriptures furnished she declared, many examples of the power of prayer. Nothing seemed to be too great, too hard, or too difficult for prayer to do. Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from Heaven. Prayer made the Sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah's sacrifice. Prayer turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. Prayer overthrew the Army of Sennacherib. Prayer has healed the sick, raised the dead, procured the conversion of souls. Prayer, pains and faith can do anything. "Let me alone" is the remarkable saying of God to Moses, when Moses was about to intercede for the children of Israel.—Exo. xxxii. 10.

So long as Abraham asked mercy for Sodom, the Lord went on giving. He never ceased to give till Abraham ceased to pray.

It was her belief that there is no condition in life, no occupation or profession however unfavourable it may appear to the cultivation of religion, which precludes the possibility, or exempts us from the obligation, of acquiring those good dispositions and exercising those Christian virtues which the Gospel requires. Men of the world are apt to imagine that religion was not made for them; that it was intended only for those who pass their days in obscurity and solitude. The case of the Centurion in the Gospel is a direct, complete and satisfactory answer to this pretence and to all such pretences. And the case of this Centurion is not the only one of a Military man and man of the world who is celebrated in the Gospel for his piety and virtue. It was a Centurion who at the Crucifixion of our Saviour, gave that voluntary and honest testimony in his favour, "Truly this was the Son of God." Another who generously preserved the life of St. Paul when a pro-

position was made to destroy him after shipwreck on the Island of Melita, and it was a third to whom St. Peter was sent, by the express appointment of God, to make him the first convert among the Gentiles.

In this manner she sought to teach her children to persevere in the right direction in spite of all discouragements, but not to expect harvest in seed time.

She also endeavoured betimes to instil in their minds prudence and practical knowledge, and repeated in this connection the significant language of a motto which she had been informed, by a traveller, was to be seen over the door-way of a Chalêt in the mountains of Switzerland:—a motto containing a volume of wordly wisdom—

“ Speak little, speak truth, spend little, pay cash.”

In the household her presence was felt from the kitchen to the attic. She ordered all the domestic arrangements—neither handing over the management of her house to the servants, or her children to nurses and governesses. She superintended in a way to see personally that all was as it should be. Careful in these matters, she was equally solicitous that her daughters should understand the proper method of regulating a household, and how to provide for the wants of a family. For this purpose she instructed them herself how to purchase, or select the different articles required for home consumption ; how to choose the various kinds of meat, fish and poultry, and then how properly to cook them. They were also instructed in the art of making tarts, puddings and even confectionary, and many a happy evening has the writer spent with his sisters, and their young school friends at what the juveniles called a “ toffee-party.” She said this kind of knowledge made them independent of ignorant servants, and was not detrimental to the dignity of any lady, mother, or daughter. She always sought to make them adepts in the science of good house wifery, as being the most useful and honorable knowledge for those whose destiny it is to become the mothers of families.

It may not be uninteresting to say a few words at this point as to the good uses to which she applied the knowledge acquired at Mr. Crutchfield's school, of the virtues of various herbs and plants. A case of illness or an accident never occurred in the family, among either whites or blacks, numbering between 60 and 100 souls, that she was not early by the bed side of the unfortunate sufferer, and as soon as she understood the case, prompt to give relief with some simple, homely remedy; for she had specifics for all mortal maladies. If accidents occurred she had balsams, cataplasms, ointments, &c., &c., prepared from flowers and herbs for external application, and in cases of fevers, or other diseases, she prescribed her decoctions, draughts, electuaries, &c., and required these nostrums to be gulped down. From the hoarhound indigenous to our fields, she prepared a decoction for colds, from the wild cherry an extract for coughs, from tansey and the bark of the dogwood tree, a tonic, from the camomile, a tea of reputed virtues, from the dandelion, the buds of the Balm of Gilead cures for dyspepsia, &c. In a word she was provided against all forms of disease with pills, plasters, powders, syrups, tinctures, elixirs—a whole catalogue of her own medicinal preparations. Of course the simple manner in which she extracted the virtues of these and other plants rendered them less potent and probably less efficacious than the preparations of the professional chemist, but they were generally applied or taken with good effect.

The value of her practical knowledge in such matters can hardly be overestimated, when it is considered how "few and far between" were the medical men in those days in Virginia; how difficult it was to procure drugs, or medicines and when they could be obtained, how often they were impaired in quality by adulterations.

These brief facts illustrative of the efficient and practical character of his excellent mother, will, he trusts tend to direct the attention of others to the study of nature as

a most useful, as well as inexhaustible source of pure and refined pleasure.

"Not a plant, a leaf, a flower, but contains a folio volume. We may read, and read and read again and still find something new—something to please and something to interest, even in the noisome weed."

Order, as may be supposed, reigned in her establishment and it was delightful to see the children assembled at table together, with clothes neatly put on, hands and faces clean, hair properly arranged the table itself laid as if company was expected. The board at the hospitable Hall was, however, rarely spread without being enlivened by the presence of guests. John Howe Peyton's public position no less than his social tastes made it a necessity as well as pleasure for him to see a great deal of company. He entertained the Federal and State judiciary and their respective bars during term time; the Federal, State and County officials; Congressional, Senatorial and Legislative representatives of both political parties; the Rectors, Visitors, and Professors of our great seats of learning; the Bishops and Clergy; such officers of the Army and Navy as were from time to time in the county, and of the Militia; and all strangers. The Hall was thus the resort of eminent persons, male and female, and it may be truly asserted that all received there lessons in accomplishments. The wisest and most gifted men found beneath that refined roof something beyond woman's prerogative, the power to call forth, as with a fairy's wand, all that is most intellectual in their masculine natures; they found assistance and advice, as well as interest and sympathy. Eloquence, politics, philosophy were alternately discussed; and when these proved too severe, the lighter arts of conversation were successfully tried, varying to the humour of the moment.

She was, in a word, the light and ornament of her home, presiding over it with dignity and grace, looking after her children and providing for the wants of a large

dependent population of negroes; and yet finding time to seek out and relieve the necessitous in the community.

Though at this time many of his mother's good qualities were not sufficiently obvious to him, such as her practical household virtues, because he was still too young to understand how much good management and general good sense is required to conduct domestic affairs properly; and fancied she took upon herself too much the duties of a housekeeper, he has had sufficient experience in after life to set the right value upon them, and to do her full and ample justice.

In those days it was his great delight to see her in company, displaying her wit and knowledge. She acquitted herself so well, never asking a silly question, or giving a foolish answer and sustained her part by her general abilities and knowledge so admirably in intellectual conversation, and inspired such respectful attention from clever men that he keenly appreciated her accomplishments and was as proud of her talents and address, as he has since been of her character, which comprehending fully in maturer years he recognizes as a combination of all that is noble and excellent.

With this insight into her character and domestic life it is easy to understand that she was universally respected and drew all, more especially her children, to her by the cords of love,—that perfect confidence existed between her and them. They felt they could trust her with the full faith of innocent childhood, and never did she turn them away by coldness, sending back the warm current of their love chilled to its source; never did she check the outpourings of their confidence by severity; never did she turn them from her grieved and disappointed by want of sympathy.

To the writer she was peculiarly affectionate, kind and considerate. She never wearied of imparting good advice to him making opportunities to expatiate on certain virtues and vices. She particularly dwelt upon the necessity of

industry, if a young man wished to secure anything good, valuable, or worth having in this world. The substance of her teachings was that the world and all things around us, remind us of the necessity of labor, for though the earth, by the blessing of the Almighty produces food sufficient for man and the various animals that inhabit it; yet, without labor, it would become a wilderness, covered with briars and thorns. But besides food and clothing our nature required that we should provide shelter against the inclemency of the weather; these are continual calls upon us for self-exertion which contributed as much to our happiness as to health. Moderate labor promoted the free circulation of the blood, and carried off disorders, which indolence would occasion; the labouring man eats his bread with an appetite to which the idle and voluptuous are strangers; his sleep is sweet, and his rest undisturbed. As for industry it was rewarded in many ways: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is wise, but he that sleepeth in harvest causeth shame."—Prov. x. 4. "He that would thrive, should rise by five;" and as Poor Richard observes, "Himself hold the plough or drive."

"The difference between rising at five or seven in the course of 40 years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same time he otherwise would, amounts to 29,000 hours, or three years, 121 days and 16 hours, which will afford 8 hours a day for exactly ten years: so that it is the same as if ten years were added to our lives, in which we command 8 hours a day for our improvement in useful things." But besides lengthening, industry sweetens life; the habitation of the industrious man is comfortable and clean, and his careful wife is truly his counterpart, always usefully employed. Difficulties in this life, however, must be expected—they should not depress or discourage us, they were necessary to quicken us to exertion and disappeared before a determined resolution to accomplish our object. Even in Paradise man was not allowed to be idle: "The Lord

God put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."—Gen. ii. 15. And ever since the fall, as part of the curse entailed by sin and mortality, its consequence, the sentence of God has come forth—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.—Gen. iii. 19. The very angels of Heaven were ministering Spirits who performed the Divine will cheerfully, actively, and diligently. A man's affairs run fast to ruin who allows his powers to lapse into indolence and sloth, and thus according to the wise man: "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich;" and "seest thou a man diligent in business; he shall stand before Kings: he shall not stand before mean men."

This was the general direction of her thoughts when in graver moments she sought to prepare her children for the career of life. Having represented the means and the value of success in worldly matters lest the imagination might be unduly excited, she would suddenly remind them that there was a purer, brighter, nobler world than this: a world where there is no ignorance to darken, no error to mislead, no infirmities to lament, no enemies to assail, no cares to harass, no sickness to endure, no changes to experience, but where all will be perfect bliss, unclouded light, unspotted purity, immortal tranquillity and joy.

It is easy to understand that their childhood was happy, and that all their recollections of it are associated with their mother, who in her capacity as wife and mistress of the family was responsible, by reason of their father's repeated absences, for the general arrangement and combination of the different elements of social and domestic comfort. She was the arbiter in all their trivial disputes, the soother of all jarring and discord, the explainer of all misunderstandings, and in short the main-spring of the machinery by which social and domestic happiness was constantly supplied both in her household and within the circle she adorned.

In the wider sphere, beyond the family circle, she was

known by acts of benevolence, rather than as one endeavouring to conform to the world. She did not strive at the same time to be a follower of the fashions and maxims of the world and a friend of Him who has declared "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Her piety was sincere and unostentatious. Her religion was that of love and good works. Her daily life was her most beautiful teaching and all of her children, at least the elder ones, carry into their lives the influence of the time spent in daily intercourse with her.

Yet she did not neglect the cultivation of social happiness—only she knew where to draw the line between light and darkness—how to enter into and enjoy the blandishments of society without lapsing into worldliness of spirit. In conversation she was ready, animated, and interesting, and impressed all with her superiority.

After her marriage she devoted every hour she could appropriate from other engagements, for several years to a regular course of reading, and to the end of her life gave much time to books. She was familiar with the Classic authors of the Grecian and Roman worlds, and the choicest belonging to our English and American literature. From them she quoted freely both in her conversation and letters. She was particularly fond, among the poets, of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Cowper, Gray, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron and of those pleasing essayists Addison, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson and Washington Irving. Under the advice of her husband she read the histories of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, Prescott and Baucroft and the novels of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Scott, Cooper and Irving.

In public affairs she was well informed and took a lively interest. A supporter of the Old Whig party, few men, not in public life, were more thoroughly acquainted than herself with political affairs. Conservative in her feelings,

she strongly disapproved the ultra democratic opinions of "Old Hickory" and his successor in the Presidency Martin Van Buren. Periodical elections for offices; the ostracism of political opponents; the extension of suffrage to non-property holders; the recurrent election at short intervals of the Judges by popular vote, she considered one and all fatal innovations on our ancient laws. It was her belief that such measures would lead to degeneration in our Statesman, drive from public life the better class of citizens, and let in demagogues, and with them introduce speculation, public plunder, and general corruption and incompetency. And the recent (1874-75) disclosures at Washington of bribery in connexion with the War-office under General Belknap, one of the principal Secretary's of State, the trial of General Babcock, the President's private Secretary, for complicity in the Whiskey frauds, the credit mobilier combinations or "rings," and other instances of official rottenness and corruption go a long way to establish her far seeing sagacity. A true lover of her country she exercised her power as a Christian mother to inspire in the hearts of her children, a profound and thrilling sense of patriotism.

In every respect a remarkable and attractive character, her history may be safely studied as a model and example. There is not a house in Virginia where the story of her domestic virtues were it properly told would not be welcomed, and in which it would not do good. Had she not been encumbered with the cares of a large establishment and the rearing of a numerous progeny, to both of which she devoted herself with thorough self-abnegation; she would doubtless have turned her attention to the pursuit of literature and might have rivalled the fame of Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Caroline Burney, Frederica Bremer, Mrs. Stowe, or any of the distinguished writers of Europe and America, past and present.

A true type she was of the mothers of our Colonial and Revolutionary era, the mothers of those great and good

men, bred amidst the trials of the border, who founded our Government upon the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Yes, these words are not used at random, but deliberately, because rightly understood they may be the motto of every Christian patriot. As the watch words of a party whose sole end was self aggrandisement, these three words were prostituted to the vilest purposes. Under a flag inscribed with them the French people were sacrificed, the streets of Paris deluged with blood, the Monarch raised to his high place by their own choice; expelled and a rule of iron and blood introduced in the name of a republic. Real liberty was sacrificed for the name of it; and the substance gave place to the shadow. Yet there is a deep meaning in these three words. A Christian may see embodied in them some of the highest truths of his holy religion. Wrongly interpreted these words join anarchy and misrule hand and hand with death. There is a liberty which belongs to the Christian man alone. It is not a liberty to sin, but a freedom from it. And so equality is a Christian truth; not that equality which would put the industrious and provident on a level with the idle and improvident, by involving all alike in hopeless poverty, but equality in the sight of Heaven, and fraternity is also a Christian truth. Acknowledging one God, our Father, in heaven how can we fail to recognize one another as brethren? Surely we are bound together by no common tie of fraternity—it is a common bond of union for all Christians. Such is Christian liberty, equality and fraternity; no vision of a brain intoxicated with licence, but sober Christian truths—and they embody no less political truths. We may be as earnest in their defence and as eager in carrying them into practice as were the misguided revolutionists in France, according to their interpretation of them. We may thus learn a lesson which those who first penned these words little thought of; we shall become better Christians, and like our ancestors, the truest friends of our country, for after all, "the best Christian is the best patriot."

This is the picture, roughly sketched, of the character of that excellent woman attempted to be brought out by brief forcible touches from personal impression of her leading features, rather than by carefully weighed and balanced summaries. She was "one of many," a model of the mothers of Virginia from whom have sprung that long list of illustrious sons from Washington and Lewis to Lee and Jackson, men who have shed imperishable glory upon their race and country, and won for Virginia the proud title of being the "Mother of States and Statesmen." And it is with no small satisfaction that the children of the "Ancient Dominion," can say amidst the present and prevalent corruption in American politics, recently brought to light at Washington City, in the cases of the President's private secretary, and of a Cabinet Minister; that Southerners have had no lot or parcel in this national disgrace.

If there is one moral quality for which in my opinion Virginia as "a nation" is distinguished, above all others it is, her integrity in her intercourse with her Sister States and the Federal Authorities, integrity in the administration of her internal Government and laws—integrity in the sound hearts and honourable feelings of her patriotic sons.

In April 1847 a great sorrow fell upon that happy home of Montgomery Hall, by the death of J. H. Peyton, a man whom there was no one in his public or private relations, who was more loved, more honoured, or more mourned by those who knew him best.

Shortly after this event her health failed and she died surrounded by her children July 1850. An event of which the writer has never lost the impression, and in connexion with which more than once have Gray's words recurred to memory, when, near the close of his life the poet, in writing to a friend says:—"I had written to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life one can never have more than a

single mother. You may think this obvious and what you call a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was at the same age very near as wise as you; I never discovered this with full evidence—I mean till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago and seems but as yesterday; and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart."

So it is in the author's case, he never knew the extent of his misfortune until it was irreparable. And now when looking back upon her life, after a quarter of a century, it is with a sorrow chastened, and brought into subjection, but but not obliterated by time! Taking a retrospect of her life the writer can think of nothing with which her friends could reproach her, unless it be a disregard of her own health and comfort.

So unselfish was she that it pleased her most to bestow upon other the best of every thing she could obtain. If her charities and sphere of usefulness were limited, it was no fault of hers—within her sphere she did her duty and her whole duty. All her actions sprang directly and solely from a sense of duty and was sustained by a healthy delight in its performance. Her life was a sincerely happy one. She was happy in her marriage and in her children, in her literary and domestic pursuits, and in the many friends who loved and valued her. She busied herself in philanthropic and educational reforms, and was one of the warmest advocates of the foundation of the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton, one of the most flourishing colleges the Southern States for the education of women. To this fund John Howe Peyton liberally subscribed, and he was President of the first Board of Trustees.

Although of an impulsive nature, her religious feelings, like her social, were deep and permanent. Socially she was genial and companionable and a favourite with both old and young. With the young she was ever ready to talk and to encourage them in their plans and studies, and she always had sympathy, advice and counsel for old and young when in trouble.

Her temperament was naturally somewhat quick. She was conscious of this infirmity and happily overcame it. Not giving herself credit however for the patience she had acquired, she has often with a womanly tear in her eye, regretted to the author that she was so easily excited and in the excitement so precipitate. She begged her children to be on their guard against such an enemy to our peace, quoting, "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

In our intercourse with society, she urged that it was our duty to curb any tendency to hastiness of temper, for as a gentleman cannot take an affront, she said, he should be very cautious how he gives one: we should persevere in all that was right, and allow no weak desire of pleasing to tempt us from the paths of virtue. In this way she proved herself the sincerest of friends and the wisest of counselors, and prepared her sons for "The court, the camp, the field, the grove."

Such in general terms was this model matron, this "mother in Israel" who deserves more than this brief notice, especially from her children whom she loved so well. The limits of this volume,* however, will not admit of a fuller narrative. This simple outline of her character and career, it is hoped, may not be considered unworthy of perusal. Gentle, affectionate and lenient, she was beloved by all who knew her. Happy in herself, she diffused happiness not only through the immediate circle which she, like a star illumined, but warming with a brilliance as effective as beautiful all within her range.

Her understanding was good as her heart, and few human beings ever lived blest with a more cheerful disposition, a more generous spirit or a tenderer heart.

* Memorials of the Lewis family.

DESCENDANTS
OF
ANNE MONTGOMERY PEYTON.

Anne Montgomery Peyton married in 1821, John Howe Peyton, and left issue.

I. John Lewis Peyton, Foreign Agent of the State of North Carolina, 1861—1865, author of "The American Crisis," &c., &c., born 1824, who married Henrietta Eliza Clarke Washington of Vernon, near Kingston, Lenoir County, North Carolina, and has issue one son.

I. Lawrence Washington Howe Peyton.

II. Yelverton Howe Peyton, unmarried, born 1838.

III. Susan Madison, who married Colonel John B. Baldwin, Col.-Commandant of the 52nd Virginia regiment during the Civil war and member of the confederate congress.

IV. Anne Montgomery died in 1870, unm.

V. Mary Preston, who married Robert Asher Gray of Hill-top, near Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia, and has issue :—

I. Baldwin, II. Peyton, III. Preston, IV. Susan,

V. Isabella.

VI. Lucy Garnett, who married John Newton Hendren, of Selma, near Staunton, Virginia; Treasurer of the Confederate States of America during the Civil war, and, in 1876, chairman of the Augusta County Quarter Sessions, and has issue :—

I. Samuel Rivers, II. Anne Montgomery, III. Lucy Peyton.

VII. Margaret Lynn, who married George Moffet Cochran, jun., a lawyer of Staunton, Virginia, and has issue :—

I. George, II. Baldwin, III. Susan.

VIII. Elizabeth Trent, who married William Boys Telfair, a lawyer of Wilmington, Clinton County, Ohio, and has issue :—

I. William Boys, II. Baldwin, III. Susan.

IX. Virginia Frances, who married Colonel Jos. F. Kent, Commandant of the — Virginia regiment during the Civil war, of Wythe County, Virginia, and has issue :—

I. Joseph Francis.

X. Cornelia, who married Thomas Brown, M.D. of Abingdon, Washington County, Virginia, who at his death in 1874, left issue :—

I. Baldwin, II. Peyton.

ANNE LEWIS NÉE MONTGOMERY.

The character of Anne Montgomery, the wife of Col. William Lewis, the "civilizer of the border," and the Grand mother of Anne Montgomery Peyton may be discovered from the following extract from Howe's history of Virginia, head of Augusta county :—

"When during the American Revolutionary war of 1776, 1783, the British force under Colonel Tarleton, drove the Virginia Legislature from Charlottesville, where it was temporarily holding its sessions, across the Blue ridge mountains to Staunton, the stillness of the Sabbath eve was broken in the latter town by the beat of drum, and volunteers were called for to oppose the progress of the Royal troops across the mountains at Rockfish gall. The elder sons of Col. William Lewis, who then resided at Fort Lewis, (his father, John Lewis having died in 1762) namely, John and Thomas were absent with the northern army



under Washington. Three sons, however, were at home whose ages were respectively, seventeen, fifteen, and thirteen years. Col. Lewis their father was prostrated by an attack of bilious fever, but his wife, Anne Montgomery of Delaware, and a relation of the distinguished General Richard Montgomery,* with the firmness of a Roman matron, called her three boys to her and bade them fly to the defence of their native land.

"Go my children," said she, "I spare not my youngest, my fair haired boy, the comfort of my declining years, I devote you all to my country. Keep back the foot of the invader from the soil of Augusta, or see my face no more."

When this incident was retailed to Washington, shortly after its occurrence, when he was encamped in the snows of New York, defending that colony, he enthusiastically exclaimed:—

"Leave me but a banner to plant upon the mountains of West Augusta, and I will rally around me the man who will lift our bleeding country from the dust, and set her free."

ANECDOTE.

In further illustration of the Roman virtue and valor of my heroic great grandmother the following anecdote, which I have often heard related in Virginia, is given:—When the Executive officers and the Legislature fled before Tarleton from Charlottesville to Staunton, June, 1781, His Excellency the Governor stopped at Fort Lewis. During dinner the Governor expressed some uneasiness lest Tarleton might swoop down upon and take them captive.

Mrs. Lewis, who was at the head of the table, said to him: "Do not allow yourself to be disturbed by such thoughts. I have sent my three boys to Rockfish Gap, and Col. Tarleton will never cross the mountains except as a prisoner or a corpse."

J. L. P.

* See the Guernsey Magazine for July, 1876, for an account of the death of General Montgomery at Quebec.

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